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# WASHINGTON, THE AMERICAN MECCA

*By* FRANK CHODOROV

IT'S JUNE IN WASHINGTON. It's June all over the country, of course, but to the capital city the month has special significance. It inaugurates the annual trek of gaping sightseers from all over the country to this American Mecca.

Soon the vacationing school teachers will be ah-ing and oh-ing before the wondrous temples of government, while prize-winning high school students will pay their worshipful respects to the pompous dignitaries and official hirelings who carry on the affairs of state. Honeymooning couples, already taking one another for granted, will transfer their admiration and adoration to the indicia of political power, while farmers, satiated with the wonders of nature in their native habitats, will be propitiating the gods of government in their air-conditioned apses. In summer, it is the proper thing for Americans to come to Washington and view with awe.

If you were to ask these visitors, they would tell you that they came here only to admire the beauty of the town. And, to be fair, this is a beautiful town. Why shouldn't it be? It is like a harlot who never soils her hands with useful work, and whose only occupation, outside of harlotry, is to preen and primp — at the expense of her admirers. Washington is, and ought to be, the most beautiful city in the country; it is also the most useless.

Putting aside the esthetic thrill which these gapers get out of the visit, they cannot but carry away with them an overpowering impression of the glory and grandeur of the government domiciled here. It must be a wondrous government that operates in this wondrous environment. And when they get back home they will tell of the invigorating, almost healing, experience of having seen the anointed and brushed the robes of greatness; even as did those who in ancient times visited Rome. They will have visited the holy of holies. And all their lives thereafter they will tell, and magnify the tale, of their almost sacred pilgrimage.

BY THE EASY processes of the simple mind, this adoration of the domes and the masonry and the statuary will spill over to the denizens of the city — to the Pharisees and Sadducees who are integrated with the monumentalization of government. They are the bureaucrats, the truly blessed. To see them in their charmed cubicles, deeply immersed in papers, is to realize that they are different from the ordinary run of mortals,

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and that the difference is not one of degree but of kind. One reads sometimes of a bureaucrat who has fallen from grace, by taking a bribe or surreptitiously letting a foreign nation in on official secrets. But, a single transgression does not disprove the infallibility of the class.

There are elected officials here too, but the aura that surrounds them is not comparable with that which surrounds the bureaucrats. The former must descend from the clouds at election time and simulate the life of ordinary men. The bureaucrat always stands aloof. He is a special person, educated and trained for the priesthood, and his adeptness with the exotic rituals of government sets him off from the rest of mankind. He wields power without benefit of votes. He is anonymous, ubiquitous, indispensable. And, in a way, he enjoys immortality; administrations and Congressmen come and go, but the bureaucracy goes on forever. It is the soul of that super-person called government.

The summer pilgrims who come to Washington ostensibly to see, but not unprepared to worship, are aided in their devotions by the droning guides. Perhaps it is only by dint of constant repetition, but it is a fact that these carefully trained expositors of the wonders of the national shrine develop an intonation strongly reminiscent of the ritualistic Sunday sermon. Every bit of monumentalized government is described with reverence. Stress is laid on the tradition, the historical significance, the inner meaning of each piece of stonework, until the weary minds and legs of the pilgrims are left limp with adoration, and are willing to settle on a religious acceptance of the whole thing.

There must be a purpose in all this architectural pageantry, this careful manicuring of parks and the elaborate horticulture, a purpose quite unrelated to mere estheticism. And, judging by results, the purpose must be like unto that of the stained glass windows and the gargoyles that adorn cathedrals: to bring the visitor into spiritual consonance with his surroundings. It is a religious purpose. This is the place where the great god government performs its miracles, this is where the "general welfare" is attended to. Here the demigods plan and direct the destinies of one hundred and sixty million mortals, here the souls of the well-taxed flock are prepared for a heaven on earth.

Politically speaking, it is good business to glamorize and glorify this modern Jerusalem. For, it is a certainty that only a fraction of the would-be worshippers get to Washington each year; and it is a certainty that each one who does partake of the religiosity of political power becomes a missionary to the folks back home. Thus, the country is made conscious of the fact that the government is great, good, glorious and superhuman.

THE DEBUNKING of Washington is the great need of the country. It is a colossal job, seeing that billions are spent each year for the specific purpose of deifying political power. But, it is a job that ought to commend itself to the young writer looking for a rather virgin field to work in. It will require the satirical skill of a Stephen Leacock,

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the epigrammatic ingenuity of a Charles Graham Sumner, the classical incisiveness of an Albert Jay Nock. Perhaps, a Gilbert & Sullivan would be most effective.

The job should be approached from a basic premise, namely, that all the legitimate functions of the national government could be carried on, as someone has said, "in a good-sized kitchen"; surely, in not over one-tenth the floor space now occupied, and with one-tenth the present personnel. That means the country would have to be instructed in the proper functions of government — the functions for which it is designed and in which it has some competence: briefly, the dispensation of justice, cheaply, and the maintenance of order. When it goes beyond these limits, government becomes a harmful intruder in the affairs of men. There is nothing the government can do that free men cannot do better.

With that as a starting point, the debunking can proceed with ease. It can be shown that the only thing government can do when it goes beyond bounds is to confiscate private property; it cannot produce anything. Its excuse for confiscation is always that it distributes the proceeds among the "deserving poor"; the fact is that most of what it takes it keeps and spends on itself. There is no justice in that. Oh yes, it can give special privileges to certain citizens at the expense of others, which is a blatant injustice, and when it does so its purpose is to gain support from those thus advantaged. It buys power with other people's money.

Practically speaking, the acquisition of political power is in proportion to the acquisition of economic power. Policemen (including bureaucrats) have to be paid. So then, the power of government is dependent on the taxes it collects. The more dollars the government has to do with the more it will do. Conversely, when the people keep their dollars the more independent they are of the interloping government. The government, being expert in these things, is well aware of the relation of the freedom of the people and their opulence, as well as the relation of its own power to their poverty, and therefore is bent on depriving them of their dollars. It is as simple as that.

Now comes the crux of the debunking formula: what is government? It is a body of people — just ordinary mortals — whose primary purpose is to get on in life with the least possible exertion. Wielding power seems to them the way to accomplish this purpose. In that way, they are relieved of the stress and strain of the competitive world; and there is the added ego-compensation which the exercise of power yields. The effect of this ego-pay can be detected in the manner of even the lowliest in government service, such as post office clerks and receptionists.

This last point, that government consists of people — just ordinary mortals — who have gotten hold of power, and nothing else, needs to be widely advertised. Apologists of power like to hide that fact in the fiction that government is a superentity quite independent of its component parts, and that it has a soul of its own and a capacity for doing things which ordinary people do not have. It is a Golden Calf needing only worship. If people can be got to accept that paganism — that is what the annual trek

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to Washington is expected to do — then it is easy to put over on them any skullduggery that these mediocrities can think of.

Yes, mediocrities. There is nothing that so impresses the critical observer in Washington than the low mental level of those who presume to manage our destinies. This should not be a startling revelation; it stands to reason that a man of ability would hardly be content to bury himself in a dust-gathering pigeonhole of government. He is there simply because he is afraid of the market place; he is there because his nature inclines him to seek the comfort and security of his prenatal state. This should be brought out. A series of candid delineations of these personalities, sometimes called profiles, would go a long way toward cutting these self-styled demigods to size.

A DEBUNKING "MOVEMENT" would be helpful. But, it needs hardly to be organized or fomented, for it would spring up automatically from a general realization that government consists of a lot of small timers who have, by hook or crook, got hold of power and are intent on increasing their power. The development of a suspicious attitude toward all people in government would suggest the use of social ostracism as a means of keeping them in line, and that would be "movement" enough.

Suppose people were to regularly shut off their radios when a politician is on the air. Suppose they would assiduously stay away from meetings addressed by a "distinguished" personage or, better still, would "sit on their hands" and titter at his inanities. The ego-pay would be gone. Their balloons would be deflated. And those who had any ability, and some self-respect, would get out of government and start making an honest living. That would be good for society.

There is no way of keeping government within bounds but by the whip of public opinion, not that expressed at the polls, but in the arena of private life. Social ostracism, or the fear of it, would go a long way toward restraining the yen for power. If the threat were held over the politician that transgression would be met with a lack of invitations to decent people's homes, government would be clean.

If the suggestion seems farfetched, consider the conduct of village or county government. These small town officials are of the same breed as that which infests Washington — in fact, they are no different from the ordinary run of people, equally susceptible to temptation; but they do toe the line of decency more often than do their Washington brethren. This is so not because they do not have as much to do with, in the way of taxes and power, but that their neighbors' opinion breathes hot on their necks. If the Washington official were in similar fear of social ostracism, he too might be of some service to the country.

Yes, the affairs of state would be vastly improved if the people stopped worshipping Washington. The great need of the Nation is the debunking of government.

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# HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Contributing Editor*

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**Article On An Article:** The title of a badly needed article today could be "Hands Off the Investigations." As a matter of record, there was such a piece under that very title, printed in *The New Republic*, organ of "liberalism," on May 21, 1924. The subject was the attempt by various Republicans of that day to "reform" congressional investigations, during the dust and heat of the probes conducted by Senators Walsh and Wheeler (Democrats) of the Teapot Dome and Elk Hills cases. The author of the piece vigorously defends the committees and rebuts arguments for throttling them. The author was Felix Frankfurter, then a Professor at the Harvard Law School.

In Washington there remain many who have vivid memories of the uproar over Wheeler and Walsh. Today, they have that "this is where I came in" feeling. In the interests of a sanity sadly lacking amidst the hullabaloo over Schine, Cohn and McCarthy, it may be instructive to recall what a man — now a hallowed Justice of the Supreme Court and "king" of the "liberals" who thirst for McCarthy's blood — said about the probers and probes of thirty years ago.

Frankfurter strikes a familiar note in the very first paragraph of his *New Republic* piece. Alluding to "powerful forces" attacking Walsh and Wheeler, he says: "The condemnation of the most powerful is reserved for the exposers and not for the exposed." And the Professor excoriates the "powerful" by describing them as ones who have nothing to say about "the astounding corruption and corrupting soil which have been brought to light," but who "seek to divert attention and shackle the future by suggesting restrictions in the procedure of future congressional investigations."

The Professor sketches in the atmosphere which preceded the opening of the Walsh-Wheeler exertions — and we could not help recalling the very same atmosphere of 1949-50 before Joe McCarthy launched his thunderbolts. Says Frankfurter: "Washington was thick with talk, and not the talk of irresponsibles. As time went on the intimations became more and more outspoken; but every influence of authority, of powerful social connections, of the press, the whole milieu of officialdom in Washington was on the side of those in power and against disclosure and truth-telling."

In 1954, we hear sneers about evidence (concerning subversive cases) that is not backed up virtually by a confession of the person investigated, the danger of dipping into government FBI files filled with "hearsay" and "gossip." But listen to Dr. Frankfurter in 1924, referring to probes of a man in the Interior Department "who, honestly or dishonestly, held one attitude rather than another toward our natural resources." Frankfurter says: "Necessarily much of this was hearsay and gossip . . . . If these aren't leads properly to be pursued, then we had better frankly admit that the power of congressional investigation is a sham, and not an effective instrument for ventilating issues for the information of Congress and of the public."

And this beautiful 1924 sentence of the "king" of present-day "liberals" stands out: "The question is not whether people's feelings here and there may be hurt, or names 'dragged through the mud,' as it is called. The real issue is whether the danger of abuses and the actual harm done are so clear and substantial that the grave risks of fettering free congressional inquiry are to be incurred by artificial and technical limitations upon inquiry."

Frankfurter makes much the same distinctions between lower court and investigative committee procedure and warns against introducing courtroom trial procedure "into a field where they have never

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been resorted to and where they are wholly out of place, namely, in the exercise of the informing function of Congress." And in finale: ". . . congressional inquiry ought not to be fettered by advance rigidities, because in the light of experience there can be no reasonable doubt that such curtailment would make effective investigation almost impossible. . . . The power of investigation should be left untrammeled, and the methods and forms of each investigation should be left for determination of Congress and its committees, as each situation arises."

**Not Merely Gossip:** One surprising scene marked the Republican cocktail party last week given for Max Rabb, key White House secretary and expert on "minorities." Some guests were astonished to see Rabb introducing Herb Block, left wing cartoonist, to Vice-President Nixon. "Herblock" whose cartoons originate in the "liberal" *Washington Post*, in 1948 celebrated the discovery of the "pumpkin papers" incriminating Alger Hiss by a sketch representing a big pumpkin drawn by six rats. The rodents obviously had reference to Whittaker Chambers, a former Communist, who had secreted the papers in the vegetable on his Maryland farm, at a time when the Hiss-Chambers case reached a climax. Nixon, then a close friend of Chambers, stood by the latter when he was the whipping boy of the "liberal" press, including the *Washington Post*.

● Much talk about how John L. Lewis has taken over another bank in Washington, merging it with one he acquired several years ago. Friends report that John L. has much to say these days, at least privately, about the necessity of a return to the gold standard.

● The Southern Governors Conference, just held at Richmond, Virginia, to discuss what to do about segregation, broke up without any public agreement between conferees. But — observers say — that does not mean that no secret agreement was reached, at least among some Southern state officials. It is emphasized that the gathering brought out great depth of feeling against the Supreme Court decision, although public utterances naturally avoided any defiance of the High Court. Noticeable was much attention given to the proposal of Governor Talmadge of Georgia, advocating abolishing the public school system and setting up state payments to parents to send their children to school. This follows in principle, although differing in implementation, a plan for which the legislature of South Carolina has already paved the way.

**Income Tax:** A little known but very important bill from the standpoint of business, the Reed-Dirksen bill, is likely to be reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee shortly and observers say it has a chance of passage by the present Congress. The measure is sponsored by Congressman Reed (R) and Senator Dirksen (R) both from Illinois. It proposes a constitutional amendment which would prevent the Federal income tax and the Federal estate tax from depriving business of private capital needed to expand production and from repressing business incentive.

The indisputable fact is that new capital comes from individuals and corporations having the larger incomes. This has existed for many years in the American economy. For instance, reliable figures show that in 1937 four and two-tenths per cent of all nonfinancial corporations contributed 88% of all corporate savings while two and four-tenths per cent of all families and individuals accounted for 79% of all the savings in these categories. Today the Federal income tax on corporations of any size starts at over 50% of their net earnings, taking in many cases much more than the owners receive in dividends. The individual income tax today ranges from a low of 20% to a high of 91%. The effect of such drastic income taxation has been to force prices to rise to secure a reasonable return on the capital invested, thus contributing materially to inflation and the depreciation of the dollar; and to deprive industry of capital needed to expand production — a need which our socialist planners have used to expand government financing agencies.

The Reed-Dirksen amendment would limit income taxes to a maximum rate of 25% but permits Congress by a vote of three-fourths of the members of each House to exceed that rate at any time.

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If Congress votes to exceed the 25% maximum rate a formula must be followed. The top rate imposed can only be fifteen points higher than the minimum one. Thus today the minimum rate for individuals is 22.2% and under this formula the highest rate could be only 37.2% or fifteen points higher. Such a proposal does not "soak the poor" because the lowest rate in the income tax today (22.2%) supplies around 84% of all revenue. Limiting the maximum income rate to fifteen points above the lowest one merely prevents a "soaking" of the rich which deprives business of capital and at the same time gives Congress a strong political incentive for making the minimum rate under the income tax as low as possible. Reckless government spending would thus be curbed with resulting benefits to all income tax payers.

Competent observers feel that the proposed amendment is vitally necessary to prevent the government from promoting socialism through expanding government finance agencies.

**Foundations:** Congressman Carroll Reece's committee investigating tax-free organizations has racked up some impressive testimony in the past ten days, despite "static" created by a critical Democratic member of the group, Representative Hays of Ohio, (what foundation officials are coaching him?). Reece is trying to find out whether institutions like the Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations are helping subversives and otherwise assisting in the spread of socialistic ideas.

Dr. David N. Rowe, Professor of Political Science at Yale, appeared before this committee and blasted the notorious Institute of Pacific Relations, which strongly influenced our policy in the Far East, leading to the present debacle. Rowe cited the IPR as demonstrating that a few bad grants can do damage far outweighing the actual proportion of such grants to the total made by foundations. Rowe had been at one time on the board of trustees of the IPR, but resigned in protest against its pro-Russian line.

The Yale Professor also criticized the "social science" instruction in the colleges saying that in the past half-century these courses seem to have been "heavily influenced" by ideas brought in from abroad, many of them coming from socialistic mentalities.

Kenneth Colegrove, Professor of Political Science at Queens College, New York, who served with General MacArthur in an advisory capacity after the war, testified that tax-free foundations tend to support educational research "slanted toward the left." Colegrove joined Rowe in denouncing the Institute of Pacific Relations. He asserted that the Pentagon had sent subversive officials to General MacArthur's Tokyo organization after the war. These officials, said Colegrove, had been recommended by the IPR. General Willoughby, MacArthur's Intelligence Chief, discovered and got rid of them, said Colegrove.

**Dulles' Dilemma:** Mr. Dulles is on the spot, and not only on foreign policy. He will have to make a decision concerned with the World Council of Churches. That body on August 15-31 will hold its Second Assembly in Evanston, Illinois — and the burning issue is whether ministerial delegates from behind the Iron Curtain shall be admitted to the country to attend this conclave. Dulles will have to pass on this.

Secretary Dulles has been an ardent champion of the World Council of Churches although on February 1, 1951 this Council sent out a letter to all member churches reading: "The peoples have seen the vision of social justice. It is for us to help transform it into reality. All people in privileged countries — particularly Christians — must strive to enter sympathetically into the social *demands* of the needy. *From each according to his ability and to each according to his needs, has its roots in the teachings of Jesus Christ.*" From each according to his ability and to each according to his needs is enshrined in the Soviet Constitution and is taken directly from Karl Marx.

Now the World Council of Churches at its forthcoming session in Evanston, Illinois, seeks to bring into the United States in violation of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act the Communist controlled

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ministers of Christianity behind the Iron Curtain. Their mission here — as amply recorded in their utterances to date — will probably be to stress to the American people that there is no conflict between Communism and Christianity. These puppets of Moscow seek to invest Communism with the sanctity of the Christian religion. One of those whose entrance into the United States is requested is Professor Josef Hromadka of Prague who in Sweden in 1952 in an address to the World Council of Churches defended the Communist world in its attitude toward NATO, rearmament of Germany, recognition of Red China, the war in Korea — virtually everything that Russia wanted.

On May 4th the National Executive Committee of the American Legion urged the State Department to deny visas in strict compliance with the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act to any "Communist or Communist-front representative who seeks to come into this country as a delegate to the conference of the World Council of Churches."

**Between Covers:** Garet Garrett (author of *The Revolution Was* and contributor to HUMAN EVENTS) has finished a history of America, the manuscript of which he has delivered to Henry Regnery Company, Publishers, Chicago. Publication is expected next winter. Reports say that this book will come as the first account of the nation's story as told from the viewpoint of an individualist.

● E. Merrill Root (author of "Darkness at Noon in the Colleges" and other articles in HUMAN EVENTS) has finished a new book on the situation in education. It will be published next fall by Devin-Adair Company. Dr. Root has been on sabbatical from Earlham College where he teaches English.

● Taylor Caldwell's latest novelette, published in *McCall's* (May), has attracted much notice for the fervor of its religious feeling and the vividness of its prophetic insight. Entitled *Your Sins and Mine.*

**Education Front:** In California, where the battle over education has been most intense (remember Pasadena), there are signs of a fight on a statewide basis. Roy E. Simpson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and a "liberal" faces opposition in the coming election, notably from David Everett, a young educator who has no use for "progressive" and "modern" education, which Everett charges has been demonstrated a failure.

"Progessive education," he remarks, "has not produced results. Children are not being educated although the cost of education is continually mounting. . . . Now, if a certain system doesn't work in industry, management must find a system that does work, or go broke. If a lawyer finds that he is continually losing cases in the courts, he must find a better method. If a doctor cannot cure a case with a certain treatment, he must find a different remedy. Then why should educators insist upon continuing an educational process that has failed miserably in producing emotionally mature students with a thorough knowledge of basic, fundamental subjects, a keen sense of spiritual values, a recognition of their own moral obligations and a desire to further their own intellectual development and economic independence?" (For more details see the interesting periodical *Facts in Education*, P. O. Box 2056D, Pasadena 2, Calif.)

● Mrs. Harold Walker, one of the founders of the Parent-Teachers Association in this country and an opponent of Federal Aid to Education is running for GOP nomination for Representative from the 1st District in Maryland.

● See Alice Widener's attack on the National Education Association (NEA) in the May 31 issue of USA, a new fortnightly published at P. O. Box 134, Lenox Hill Station, New York 21, N. Y., by Mrs. Widener and Suzanne LaFollette (formerly of *The Freeman*).

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